Why the Anxiety?

The Effects of Coping Strategies, Role Strain, and Sexual Harassment on Women College Students

Abstract

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Amanda May

This paper explored the reasons women college students experience higher anxiety than men. A review of literature in the fields of education, psychology, and sociology was conducted and three themes emerged as affecting the level of anxiety women experience: gender differences among coping strategies, higher amounts of role strain among women, and sexual harassment. Although previous literature explored the correlation of these areas and anxiety, none of the reviewed literature discussed the relationship among all three of these areas and anxiety among women college students. The link between socialization and these three components was discussed as a contributing factor in anxiety among women college students. This paper also discussed the need for higher education institutions to reframe how each gender is socialized by educating students on appropriate and healthy coping strategies. Additionally, conversations with men must occur to challenge the perception of traditional gender roles. Workshops to educate both men and women regarding more equitable role distribution may change current views on gender roles. Finally, higher education institutions must implement and enforce stricter penalties for individuals found guilty of sexual harassment. Addressing these implications is important to decrease anxiety among women college students. This literature review contributes to the current literature and goes a step further by addressing the relationship between coping strategies, role strain, sexual harassment, and anxiety among women college students.